

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of warning individuals that a top surface of a stove is hot, the method comprising:
  - (a) manufacturing a stove of a type having a plurality of heating elements each heating element surrounded by a smooth area of the top surface, such as glass or metal,
  - (b) for each heating element applying to a surrounding smooth area, which surrounding smooth area represents a portion of the top surface of the stove surrounding the heating element, a thermochromic composition in liquid or semi-liquid state in a form of a ring element, the thermochromic composition designed to undergo and maintain a readily perceptible color change whenever and so long as a part of either the heating element or the surrounding smooth area exceeds a predetermined temperature, the color change of the thermochromic composition revealing a heat warning symbol that communicates that the heating element or the surrounding smooth area is dangerously hot, and
  - (c) allowing the thermochromic composition to dry to a solid state.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein applying the thermochromic composition means applying the thermochromic composition that is sufficiently similar in color to a background color of the surrounding smooth area that the thermochromic composition and the heat warning symbol are readily visible against the background color of the surrounding smooth area only when and so

long as the temperature of the surface exceeds the predetermined temperature.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein applying the thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element means applying said thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element at a distance of between approximately one half an inch and approximately two inches from the smooth area of glass or metal.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition is performed by spraying, stamping, printing, stenciling, embossing or silk screening the thermochromic composition onto the portion of the smooth top surface.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition involves applying thermochromic composition that is ink or epoxy resin.

6. The method of claim 4, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition involves applying thermochromic composition that is ink or epoxy resin.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein applying the thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element means applying said thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element at a distance of between approximately one half an inch and approximately two inches from the smooth area of glass or metal.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein applying the thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element means applying said thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element that has at least one interrupted portion thereof, said at least one interrupted portion including a symbol that conveys that the top surface is dangerously hot

9. The method of claim 8, wherein applying the thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element means applying said thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element at a distance of between approximately one half an inch and approximately two inches from the smooth area of glass or metal.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition is performed by spraying, stamping, printing, stenciling, embossing or silk screening the thermochromic composition onto the portion of the smooth top surface.

11. The method of claim 8, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition involves applying thermochromic composition that is ink or epoxy resin.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition involves applying thermochromic composition that is ink or epoxy resin.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein applying the thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element means applying said thermochromic composition in the form of a ring

element at a distance of between approximately one half an inch and approximately two inches from the smooth area of glass or metal.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein in addition to the step of applying the thermochromic composition there is a further step of applying an adjoining element of thermochromic composition adjoining more than one of the ring elements.

15. A method of warning individuals that a top surface of a stove is hot, the stove of a type having a plurality of heating elements each heating element surrounded by a smooth area of the top surface, such as glass or metal, the method comprising:

(a) for each heating element applying to a surrounding smooth area, which surrounding smooth area represents a portion of the top surface of the stove surrounding the heating element, a thermochromic composition in liquid or semi-liquid state in a form of a ring element, the thermochromic composition designed to undergo and maintain a readily perceptible color change whenever and so long as a part of either the heating element or the surrounding smooth area exceeds a predetermined temperature, the color change of the thermochromic composition revealing a heat warning symbol that communicates that the heating element or the surrounding smooth area is dangerously hot, and

(b) allowing the thermochromic composition to dry to a solid state.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein applying the thermochromic composition means applying the thermochromic composition that is sufficiently similar in color to a background color

of the surrounding smooth area that the thermochromic composition and the heat warning symbol are readily visible against the background color of the surrounding smooth area only when and so long as the temperature of the surface exceeds the predetermined temperature.

17. The method of claim 15, wherein applying the thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element means applying said thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element at a distance of between approximately one half an inch and approximately two inches from the smooth area of glass or metal.

18. The method of claim 15, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition is performed by spraying, stamping, printing, stenciling, embossing or silk screening the thermochromic composition onto the portion of the smooth top surface.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition involves applying thermochromic composition that is ink or epoxy resin.

20. The method of claim 15, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition involves applying thermochromic composition that is ink or epoxy resin.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein applying the thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element means applying said thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element at a distance of between approximately one half an inch and approximately two inches

from the smooth area of glass or metal.

22. The method of claim 15, wherein applying the thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element means applying said thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element that has at least one interrupted portion thereof, said at least one interrupted portion including a symbol that conveys that the smooth top surface is dangerously hot

23. The method of claim 22, wherein applying the thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element means applying said thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element at a distance of between approximately one half an inch and approximately two inches from the smooth area of glass or metal.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition is performed by spraying, stamping, printing, stenciling, embossing or silk screening the thermochromic composition onto the portion of the top surface.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition involves applying thermochromic composition that is ink or epoxy resin.

26. The method of claim 22, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition involves applying thermochromic composition that is ink or epoxy resin.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein applying the thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element means applying said thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element at a distance of between approximately one half an inch and approximately two inches from the smooth area of glass or metal.

28. The method of claim 15, wherein in addition to the step of applying the thermochromic composition there is a further step of applying an adjoining element of thermochromic composition adjoining more than one of the ring elements.

29. A method of warning individuals that a top surface of a stove is hot, the stove of a type having a plurality of heating elements each heating element surrounded by a smooth area of the top surface, such as glass or metal, the method comprising:

for each heating element

(a) applying to a surrounding smooth area, which surrounding smooth area represents a portion of the top surface of the stove surrounding the heating element, a heat warning symbol that communicates that part of the heating element or the surrounding smooth area is dangerously hot, said heat warning symbol being able to withstand the temperature of least 300 degrees Fahrenheit,

(b) applying to the surrounding smooth area a thermochromic composition in liquid or semi-liquid state in a form of a ring element, the thermochromic composition designed to undergo and maintain a readily perceptible color change whenever and so long as a part of either the heating element or the surrounding smooth area exceeds a predetermined temperature, the color

change of the thermochromic composition revealing the heat warning symbol, and allowing the thermochromic composition to dry to a solid state.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein applying the thermochromic composition means applying a thermochromic composition that is sufficiently similar in color to a background color of the surrounding smooth area that the thermochromic composition and the heat warning symbol are readily visible against the background color of the surrounding smooth area only when and so long as the temperature of the surface exceeds the predetermined temperature.

31. The method of claim 29, wherein the applying of the heat warning symbol is performed by spraying, painting, embossing, stenciling, stamping, printing or silk screening an epoxy or ink in the form of the heat warning symbol.

32. The method of claim 30, wherein applying a heat warning symbol in step (a) means applying a heat warning symbol that has a reflective quality in order to increase visibility.

33. The method of claim 29, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition is performed by spraying, stamping, printing, stenciling, embossing or silk screening the thermochromic composition onto the portion of the top surface.

34. The method of claim 29, wherein the applying of the heat warning symbol is performed by spraying, painting, embossing, stenciling, stamping, printing or silk screening an

epoxy or ink in the form of the heat warning symbol and wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition is performed by spraying, stamping, printing, stenciling, embossing or silk screening the thermochromic composition onto the portion of the smooth top surface.

35. The method of claim 33, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition involves applying thermochromic composition that is ink or epoxy resin.

36. The method of claim 29, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition involves applying thermochromic composition that is ink or epoxy resin.

37. The method of claim 29, wherein applying the thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element means applying said thermochromic composition in the form of a ring element that has at least one interrupted portion thereof, said at least one interrupted portion including a symbol that conveys that the top surface is dangerously hot

38. The method of claim 37, wherein the applying of the heat warning symbol is performed by spraying, painting, embossing, stenciling, stamping, printing or silk screening an epoxy or ink in the form of the heat warning symbol.

39. The method of claim 37, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition is performed by spraying, stamping, printing, stenciling, embossing or silk screening the thermochromic composition onto the portion of the smooth top surface.

40. The method of claim 37, wherein the applying of the heat warning symbol is performed by spraying, painting, embossing, stenciling, stamping, printing or silk screening an epoxy or ink in the form of the heat warning symbol and wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition is performed by spraying, stamping, printing, stenciling, embossing or silk screening the thermochromic composition onto the portion of the smooth top surface.

41. The method of claim 39, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition involves applying thermochromic composition that is ink or epoxy resin.

42. The method of claim 37, wherein the applying of the thermochromic composition involves applying thermochromic composition that is ink or epoxy resin.

43. The method of claim 29, wherein the applying of the heat warning symbol is performed by spraying, painting, embossing, stenciling, stamping, printing or silk screening an epoxy or ink in the form of the heat warning symbol, said heat warning symbol being able to withstand temperatures of at least 400 degrees Fahrenheit.

44. The method of claim 43, wherein the applying of the heat warning symbol is performed by spraying, painting, embossing, stenciling, stamping, printing or silk screening an epoxy or ink in the form of the heat warning symbol, said heat warning symbol being able to withstand temperatures of at least 500 degrees Fahrenheit.

45. The method of claim 29, wherein in addition to the step of applying the thermochromic composition there is a further step of applying an adjoining element of thermochromic composition adjoining more than one of the ring elements.

46. The method of claim 29, wherein applying a heat warning symbol in step (a) means applying a heat warning symbol that has a reflective quality in order to increase visibility.